

Message Text

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12

ACTION AF-18

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FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6861

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KHARTOUM 1675

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SU

SUBJ: CELEBRATION OF "RETURN DAY"--SECOND ANNIVERSARY 1971

COUNTER-COUP

1. ANNIVERSARY RALLY: GOS MARKED JULY 22, SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF RETURN DAY, BY DECLARING HALF-HOLIDAY FOR GOS WORKERS IN KHARTOUM AND SCHEDULING DEMONSTRATION AND MARCH FROM SSU HDQTRS TO MARTYRS SQ. SPEECHES BLASTED COMMUNISTS FOR HAVING CONSPIRED AGAINST REVOLUTION AND PRAISED PEOPLE AND ARMED FORCES FOR HAVING RALLIED TO CAUSE OF MAY REVOLUTION. PERHAPS 10,000 PARTICIPATED IN PARADE, BUT CIRCA SEVENTY PERCENT CONSISTED OF MILITARY AND POLICEUNITS ASSEMBLED FOR OCCASION. RALLY LAST YEAR OF ABOUT SAME SIZE, BUT "SPONTANEOUS POPULAR PARTICIPATION" GREATER. PRESS REPORTS THAT SIMILAR "MASS" RALLIES HELD OTHER CENTERS INCLUDING ONE IN NYALA WHERE NIMAIRI, CONTINUING HIS TOUR OF COUNTRY, ADDRESSED THE CROWD. PRESIDENT'S SPEECH IN SIMILAR ANTI-COMMUNIST VEIN, INCLUDING ASSERTION THAT COMMUNISTS HAD FROM BEGINNING CONTRIBUTED NOTHING TO REVOLUTION.

2. IMPRESSIONS: EMBASSY LOCAL EMPLOYEE WHO OBSERVED KHARTOUM RALLY WAS STRUCK BY ABSENCE POPULAR PARTICIPATION, PARTICULARLY FROM GOVERNMENT WORKERS AND "OPINION MAKERS" OF KHARTOUM. HE ALSO RECOGNIZED NUMBER OF OTHER OBSERVERS (EX-POLITICIANS AND VARIOUS PUBLIC FIGURES) SIMILARLY OBSERVING DEMONSTRATION AND TESTING POLITICAL WINDS.

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3. COMMENT: WE DO NOT READ TOO MUCH INTO LACK OF PUBLIC

ENTHUSIASM FOR RETURN DAY DEMONSTRATION: COUNTER-COUP IS A YEAR FURTHER AWAY, NIMAIRI WAS NOT IN TOWN, AND EVENT WAS NOT DECLARED PUBLIC HOLIDAY. PUBLIC MALAISE IS, HOWEVER, PART OF PATTERN WE HAVE BEEN REPORTING RECENT WEEKS. THIS ATTITUDE, AND PARTICULARLY THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS BEHIND IT, IS AN ISSUE OF PRIME CONCERN TO GOS. IT IS ACCORDINGLY MOTIVATION FOR NIMAIRI TO SEEK INSPIRATION AND INSTILL SSU MOTIVATION THROUGH HIS CURRENT CAMPAIGN OF PERSONAL APPEARANCES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. FRITTS

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